

CONCERT PROGRAM I:

## Genius Ignited, 1811–1819



## JULY 18 AND 19

Saturday, July 18, 6:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton

Sunday, July 19, 6:00 p.m., Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

On September 28, 1804, at the age of seven, Franz Schubert auditioned for Antonio Salieri, the Austrian imperial Kapellmeister and the teacher of Beethoven and Liszt. Coming under the tutelage of one of Europe's most famous musicians, he immersed himself in music from all angles: as violinist and violist, singer, composer, and conductor. Concert Program I summarizes the amazing first decade of Schubert's career, during which he composed some seven hundred works. We will pay tribute to a major influence, Mozart, with one of his most passionate string quartets, echoed by an early exploration in the same genre by Schubert. After showcasing three revelatory songs that helped launch Schubert's career, the program concludes with a work that commands a top spot on the desert island lists of music lovers: the bucolic "Trout" Quintet.

## Fête the Festival

8:30 p.m., following the concert

Join the Artistic Directors, festival musicians, and friends on July 18 to celebrate the season's first concert at an outdoor catered dinner reception on the Menlo School campus. (Tickets: \$65. Advance purchase required.)

## SPECIAL THANKS

Music@Menlo dedicates these performances to the following individuals with gratitude for their generous support:

July 18: Darren H. Bechtel and also to Iris and Paul Brest

July 19: Dr. Condoleezza Rice

Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947).

*Call of the Heaven. Lightning*, 1935–1936.

Art Resource, NY

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756–1791)

String Quartet in d minor, K. 421 (1783)

*Allegro*

*Andante*

*Minuetto: Allegretto*

*Allegretto ma non troppo*

Escher String Quartet: Adam Barnett-Hart, Aaron Boyd, *violins*; Pierre Lapointe, *viola*; Brook Speltz, *cello*

## FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Overture in c minor for String Quartet, D. 8a (1811)

Escher String Quartet: Adam Barnett-Hart, Aaron Boyd, *violins*; Pierre Lapointe, *viola*; Brook Speltz, *cello*

*Gretchen am Spinnrade*, op. 2, D. 118 (Goethe) (October 19, 1814)

Joëlle Harvey, *soprano*; Hyeyeon Park, *piano*

*Erlkönig*, op. 1, D. 328 (Goethe) (1815)

Nikolay Borchev, *baritone*; Hyeyeon Park, *piano*

## INTERMISSION

## FRANZ SCHUBERT

*Die Forelle*, op. 32, D. 550 (Schubert) (1817)

Joëlle Harvey, *soprano*; Jeffrey Kahane, *piano*

Quintet in A Major for Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass, op. posth. 114, D. 667,

"Die Forelle" ("The Trout") (Autumn 1819)

*Allegro vivace*

*Andante*

*Scherzo: Presto*

*Andantino (Tema con variazioni)*

*Finale: Allegro giusto*

Jeffrey Kahane, *piano*; Arnaud Sussmann, *violin*; Sunmi Chang, *viola*; Keith Robinson, *cello*; Scott Pingel, *bass*

# Program Notes: Genius Ignited, 1811–1819

Notes on the Program by Patrick Castillo

## WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

(Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg; died December 5, 1791, Vienna)

### String Quartet in d minor, K. 421

**Composed:** June 1783

**Published:** 1785, Vienna, as Opus 10 Number 2

**First performance:** January 15, 1785 (see notes below)

**Other works from this period:** *Idomeneo*, K. 366 (1780–1781); Symphony no. 35 in D Major, K. 385, *Haffner* (1782); Duo in G Major for Violin and Viola, K. 423 (1783); Duo no. 2 in B-flat Major for Violin and Viola, K. 424 (1783); *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786); *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525 (1787); *Don Giovanni*, K. 527 (1787)

**Approximate duration:** 26 minutes

Mozart enjoyed, according to musicologist Alfred Einstein, “one of the profoundest [experiences] in his artistic life” in 1781, when he first encountered the six **Opus 33** quartets of Joseph Haydn: seminal works by the acknowledged father of the string quartet genre which helped to install the medium at the center of the chamber music repertoire for generations to come. Mozart, enthralled by Haydn’s approach to form, thematic development, instrumental writing, and ensemble texture, set forth to produce an equivalent set of six—not in imitation of Haydn’s but “extending their implications,” writes biographer Maynard Solomon.

Mozart composed the first three of what became known as his “Haydn” Quartets between December 1782 and July 1783; the latter three were completed between November 1784 and January 1785. Each set of three was first heard at Mozart’s Vienna apartment, featuring the composer as violist and with Haydn in attendance. At the second of these readings, Haydn famously remarked to Leopold Mozart, Wolfgang’s father: “Before God, and as an honest man, I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me, either in person or by name. He has taste and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition.” (Such praise was never given Beethoven, his own pupil.)

Mozart subsequently sent his six quartets to Haydn on September 1, 1785, accompanied by the following dedication:

To my dear friend Haydn,

A father who had decided to send out his sons into the great world thought it is his duty to entrust them to the protection and guidance of a man who was very celebrated at the time and who, moreover, happened to be his best friend.

In like manner I send my six sons to you, most celebrated and very dear friend. They are, indeed, the fruit of a long and arduous labor; but the hope that many friends have given me that this toil will be in some degree rewarded encourages me and flatters me with the thought that these children may one day be a source of consolation to me.

During your last stay in this capital, you yourself, my dear friend, expressed to me your approval of these compositions. Your good opinion encourages me to offer them to you and leads me to hope that you will not consider them wholly unworthy of your favor. Please, then, receive them kindly and be to them a father, guide, and friend! From this moment I surrender to you all my rights over them. I entreat you, however, to be indulgent to those faults that may have escaped a father’s partial eye and, in spite of them, to continue in your generous friendship toward one who so highly

appreciates it. Meanwhile, I remain with all my heart, dearest friend, your most sincere friend.

W. A. Mozart

Mozart’s father-son metaphor seems curiously close to home when considering the circumstances surrounding the completion of the Quartet in d minor, K. 421, the second of the “Haydn” set. Mozart worked on this quartet in the days leading up to the birth of his first son, Raimund Leopold, on June 17, 1783. (It has even been claimed—to what degree of believability, the reader may decide—that Mozart was at work in the same room while his wife, Constanze, was in labor, alternately comforting her and then returning to his desk in calmer moments. Six weeks later, Wolfgang and Constanze traveled to Salzburg, leaving Raimund with a wet nurse from July to October; when they returned to Vienna, they found their infant son had died in their absence.)

The character of the d minor Quartet—the only one of the “Haydn” Quartets in a minor key—is predominantly anxious and unsettled, almost without respite, from beginning to end. This is not to suggest, however, that its four **movements** do not offer great textural variety and expressive nuance. The dourness of the first movement ***Allegro moderato*** is an agitated one, marked by wide melodic leaps of an **octave** or more (beginning with the nosedive in the first violin that begins the first theme), restless **syncopations**, and menacing **trills**. The third movement contrasts the **minuet**’s graceful gait with a moody **chromaticism**—inspired, according to Constanze, by her labor pains. The quartet concludes with a heady **theme-and-variations** movement: witness the rhythmic complexity of the second variation, setting syncopations in the first violin and rolling **triplets** in the second atop a steady 6/8 pulse in the lower strings.

But these variegated musical characters are better understood as subtly shaded facets of a richly singular expressive statement rather than as distinct utterances. They are unified by key signature—apart from the ***Andante***, in the **relative key** of F major, each movement is in d minor—but also by sheer compositional craft. Notice the gesture that immediately follows the aforementioned octave descent in the quartet’s opening theme: a trill, a turn, and three repeated notes.

A **motif** appears at the end of the **exposition**—on first listen, it is but a seemingly insignificant bit of punctuation—yet bearing a resemblance to the repeated notes of the movement’s opening measures.

The first bars of the gently flowing ***Andante*** reveal this three-note motif to be the genetic code of the entire quartet, unifying its four movements into a cogent whole.

\*Bolded terms are defined in the glossary, which begins on page 94.



The three repeated notes likewise mark the central melody of the *Minuetto*—



—and appear, in triplicate, atop the theme of the finale.



In its intricacies and, more broadly, its overall emotive import, the d minor Quartet demonstrates Mozart's "taste and...most profound knowledge of composition" indeed. Solomon writes that Mozart's "Haydn" Quartets "permanently transfigured the genre and imbued it with a degree of subjectivity and intensity of feeling that was not again reached until Beethoven's 'Razumovsky' Quartets two decades later." While acknowledging Haydn's foundational role in the development of a rich musical tradition, this d minor Quartet, as well as its five siblings, more forcefully asserts Mozart's place at that tradition's pinnacle.

## FRANZ SCHUBERT

(Born January 31, 1797, Vienna; died November 19, 1828, Vienna)

### Overture in c minor for String Quartet, D. 8a

**Composed:** after July 12, 1811 (orig. for string quintet: June 29, 1811)

**Published:** 1970

**Other works from this period:** Detailed in the notes below

**Approximate duration:** 9 minutes

The **Overture** in c minor, composed in 1811, when Schubert was just fourteen years old, documents the composer's remarkable musical childhood and adolescence. When he was seven years old, Schubert auditioned for Antonio Salieri, the Austrian imperial **Kapellmeister** and one of Vienna's most celebrated musical figures. Salieri was impressed with Schubert's gifts—in particular, his singing voice—and judged him competent to sing at services in the imperial Hofkapelle.

The following year, Schubert began studying the violin with his father and music theory with Michael Holzer, the organist at the church the Schuberts attended. Holzer was dumbfounded by his young student. "Whenever I wished to impart something new to him," Holzer said, "he always knew it already." Another teacher, the court organist Ruzicka, despaired, "I can teach him nothing, he has learnt it from God himself." Schubert's brother Ferdinand reports that by this time, the child Franz had already begun composing songs, piano pieces, and string quartets.

In 1808, Schubert auditioned for and won a place in the Hofkapelle choir. Perks of the position included free tuition and board at the Imperial and Royal City College, which boasted a high-level student orchestra. Schubert joined the orchestra's second-violin section, giving him the opportunity to become intimately familiar with the orchestral works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. (Mozart's Symphony no. 40 and Beethoven's Symphony no. 2 became personal favorites.) Schubert also began taking regular composition lessons with Salieri.

Schubert's earliest surviving compositions, dating from when he was around thirteen years old, include a four-hand piano **fantasy**, his first **lied**, and other works in genres and forms that would become essential parts of his mature output. These earliest works betray the

clear influence of Haydn, Mozart, and Bach, as well as of Rossini, whose comic operas were hugely popular in Vienna during this time.

Schubert originally composed the Overture in c minor as a work for string quintet—string quartet with an added viola—a genre popularized by Mozart's six viola quintets. Shortly after completing the work, Schubert made a separate arrangement of the same for string quartet.

The Overture begins with a somber introduction. The first violin introduces the galloping theme as the piece enters its main *Allegro* section—music reminiscent of the minor-key chamber works of Haydn and Mozart. The second theme, in A-flat major, foils the sternness of this music with a rustic lyricism. A sure-handed **development** section and **recapitulation** not only testify to the teenage composer's competent integration of the formal models of his **Classical** forebears but moreover reveal a musical imagination that would soon come fully into bloom.

## FRANZ SCHUBERT

**Gretchen am Spinnrade, op. 2, D. 118 (Goethe); Erlkönig, op. 1, D. 328 (Goethe); Die Forelle, op. 32, D. 550 (Schubert)**

**Composed:** *Gretchen am Spinnrade*: October 19, 1814; *Erlkönig*: 1815; *Die Forelle*: 1817

**Published:** *Gretchen am Spinnrade*: 1821, as Opus 2; *Erlkönig*: 1821, as Opus 1

**Other works from this period:** String Quartet in B-flat Major, op. 168, D. 112 (1814); Symphony no. 2 in B-flat Major, D. 125 (1814–1815); Piano Sonata no. 1 in E Major, D. 157 (1815); Symphony no. 3 in D Major, D. 200 (1815); Piano Sonata no. 5 in A-flat Major, D. 557; no. 6 in e minor, D. 566; no. 7 in D-flat Major, D. 567; and no. 9 in B Major, op. posth. 147, D. 575 (1817); Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano, D. 574, "Duo" (1817)

**Approximate duration:** 9 minutes

His magnificent accomplishments in virtually every other musical genre notwithstanding, Schubert's lieder—which number more than six hundred and set texts by more than 150 poets—unquestionably represent his most significant contribution to the repertoire. While much of Schubert's music went unrecognized during his lifetime, his songs for voice and piano were frequently performed—primarily at the **Schubertiades**, intimate affairs centered on Schubert's music—and were cherished by all who heard them.

Robert Winter has written, "Schubert's uniqueness lay...in his ability to fuse poetry and music in ways that seem not only unique but inevitable...Schubert's songs can withstand the closest scrutiny because they contain so many layers of meaning and stylistic intersection." Schubert's penetrating sensitivity to text is reflected not only in his melodic sensibility—which, of course, is one of his supreme gifts—but also in his imaginative piano accompaniments, how they interact with the vocal writing and relate to the text, illuminating or at times even contradicting the words being sung.

Schubert's innovations to the art song elevated the entire genre, transforming it from simple, domestic fare into a musical form of primary importance for composers of the Romantic generation and beyond. They are his legacy, rightly earning him the sobriquet the "Prince of Song." The composer's friend Josef von Spaun perhaps best summarized Schubert's legacy as a composer of lieder: "In this category he stands unexcelled, even unapproached...Every one of his songs is in reality a poem on the poem he set to music...Who among those who had the good fortune to hear some of his greatest songs does not remember how this music made a long-familiar poem new for him, how it was suddenly revealed to him and penetrated his very depth?"

The fall of 1814 launched the seventeen-year-old Schubert into a period of fierce creativity that lasted more than a year. During this

time, he completed two string quartets, two symphonies, two masses, and more than 150 songs; it has been calculated that he averaged more than sixty-five measures of music each day, without even accounting for work that did not survive.

In the category of lieder, Schubert obsessed over one poet at a time. One of these was Goethe, whose *Faust* had made a huge impression on the young composer. Schubert's first setting of Goethe was *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (*Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel*), composed in October of 1814. The text portrays a young woman, seated at her spinning wheel, fixating on Faust's promises:

My peace is gone  
My heart is heavy;  
Never, but never again,  
shall I find peace.

Where I do not have him,  
That is the grave,  
The whole world  
Is bitter to me.

Swirling about the vocal line is the song's piano accompaniment, which ingeniously depicts both the spinning wheel and Gretchen's agitation.

*Gretchen am Spinnrade* is widely considered to mark the start of the German lied tradition. Robert Winter notes: "Nothing in the Berlin school or in the songs of Haydn, Mozart, or Beethoven could have prepared Schubert's admirers for his breakthrough lied, *Gretchen am Spinnrade*...Not only do its freely modified strophes trace a mounting dramatic trajectory that unites the whole but the spinning-wheel accompaniment serves as one of the protagonists."

Alongside *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, Schubert's *Erkönig* (*The Elf-King*), composed in 1815, also represents one of the composer's earliest breakthrough works in the art song genre. The song sets a poem by Goethe which tells the story of a young boy riding home on horseback through the night with his father. As they ride, the boy, terrified, sees and hears a supernatural being—the Elf-King—attempting to lure him away; the boy's father assures him that it's only the fog, the wind, the nighttime shadows. But finally, the Elf-King attacks the boy. The father arrives home to find that his son has died in his arms.

In Schubert's remarkable setting, with the thrilling piano accompaniment providing a cinematic backdrop, the singer manifests all four of the poem's voices: the father, the son, the Elf-King, and the narrator. Each is ingeniously distinguished by its own musical character.

The conception of *Erkönig* further illustrates Schubert's uncanny genius. Josef von Spaun recalled witnessing the song's creation. Spaun arrived at Schubert's home to find the composer closely studying Goethe's text. Spaun recalls, "He paced up and down several times with the book, suddenly he sat down, and in no time at all (just as quickly as you can write), there was the glorious ballad finished on the paper. We ran with it to the seminary, for there was no piano at Schubert's, and there, on the very same evening, the *Erkönig* was sung and enthusiastically received."

The lieder set on Concert Program I concludes with *Die Forelle* (*The Trout*), a setting of a poem by Schubert's friend Christian Schubart. The poem describes a trout's effortless escape from a fisherman. Schubert's piano accompaniment vividly depicts both the babbling brook and the trout's slippery elusiveness.

## FRANZ SCHUBERT

**Quintet in A Major for Piano, Violin, Viola, Cello, and Bass, op. posth. 114, D. 667, "Die Forelle" ("The Trout")**

**Composed:** 1819

**Published:** 1829, as Opus 114

**First performance:** Detailed in the notes below

**Other works from this period:** *Die Forelle*, op. 32, D. 550 (1817); Four Polonaises for Piano Duet, op. 75, D. 599 (1818); *Die Zwillingenbrüder*, Theatrical Work for Voices, Mixed Chorus, and Orchestra, D. 647 (1818–1819); *Salve Regina (Offertorium)* in A Major, op. 153, D. 676 (1819); Overture in F Major for Piano, Four Hands, op. 34, D. 675 (1819); *Quartettssatz* in c minor, D. 703 (1820)

**Approximate duration:** 35 minutes

Schubert composed his masterly Piano Quintet in A Major, subtitled "Die Forelle" ("The Trout") after his lied of the same name, during the summer of 1819, while vacationing in northern Austria with the baritone Johann Vogl. On a stop in the small town of Steyr, Schubert and Vogl visited with a wealthy patron and amateur cellist, Sylvester Paumgartner, who regularly hosted chamber music gatherings at his home with other amateur players. On their visit, Paumgartner requested that Schubert compose a new work for one of these affairs, specifically, a quintet to complement the Quintet in d minor of Johann Nepomuk Hummel, scored for the unusual combination of piano, violin, viola, cello, and double bass (actually an arrangement of his Opus 74 Septet for Piano, Winds, and Strings). It was likewise Paumgartner's request that the new quintet include a set of variations on *Die Forelle*.

Additionally testifying to Schubert's genius, the story goes that, in a rush to satisfy Paumgartner's request in time for his next soirée, Schubert, having fully conceived the new work in his head, forewent writing out the full score and set immediately to preparing the individual string parts; the piano part he played himself, without having written down a note.

The quintet's pseudo-orchestral instrumentation—the piano's vast range, the foundation laid by the double bass—belies the intimate character of its musical content. Its affability, in turn, masks its impeccable craftsmanship. That the "Trout" Quintet has endured among the most beloved works of the chamber literature testifies, among others of Schubert's qualities, to the fierce precocity of the musical genius whose "late" works would be those completed in his thirty-first year.

Following a cheerful ascending flourish in the piano, an amiable conversation among the strings prefigures the opening *Allegro vivace*'s first theme, an utterance disarmingly warm and bright. As it proceeds, the movement is marked most of all by its melodic generosity, featuring no fewer than five distinct melodic ideas, each a broadly open-armed tune. Befitting the movement's melodic abundance, Schubert's ensemble writing is equally rich, full of textural variety and giving each instrument its moment in the sun. The inclusion of the double bass is noteworthy, particularly for freeing the cello to soar, as in the second theme in E major—a long-breathed duet between violin and cello. The movement features a development section in the Classical tradition but never strays far from its bucolic temperament.

The second movement *Andante*—in F major, a key traditionally associated with pastoral settings, as in Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony—extends the first movement's idyllic character, slowed to a graceful serenity. The movement, comprising three themes, moreover features further textural ingenuity, as rich sonorities shift before our ears from one moment to the next. Witness the combination of viola and cello to croon the movement's second theme, a tender melody in f-sharp minor, accompanied by a steady pulse in the bass, delicate triplets in the piano, and dotted-rhythm highlights in the violin. A contented D major melody follows at the rhythmic gait of a march, but it is voiced in a gentle whisper, utterly devoid of martial pomp.

The second half of the movement repeats the first, essentially verbatim, but in different keys. The return to the opening section shifts from the march's D major **cadence** to the savory warmth of A-flat—a dramatic

shift in atmosphere accentuated by the harmonic remoteness. The duet between viola and cello is reprised in tearful a minor, and the reappearance of the pacifist march brings the movement back to the home key.

Schubert jolts the listener out of the second-movement reverie with a vigorous outburst to launch the **scherzo**—it is the quintet's shortest movement, but it has an irrepressible energy packed into its miniature frame. This is music of brazen, bawdy fun, accented, near the scherzo section's end, by an earthy bellow in the double bass.

The theme and set of six variations on *Die Forelle* that compose the quintet's fourth movement conjure an Arcadian paradise—so welcoming and unassuming as to perhaps obscure the sophistication of the composer's technique. But here, too, we encounter Schubert's thoughtful approach to instrumental writing: in the first variation, as the bass provides the harmonic foundation and the piano presents the theme in glimmering octaves, the cello luxuriates in its rich upper **register**, uttering graceful ornaments in dialogue with the violin. In the following variation, the viola takes over the tune, and the violin offers a shimmering countermelody. The excitement intensifies in the third variation, as the triplet-based accompaniment pattern gives way to thirty-second notes in the piano. Schubert assigns the melody to the cello and double bass, lending it a new timbre.

The fourth variation offers the most drastic transformation of the theme, as the music explodes with crashing **fortissimo** chords in stormy d minor. But the clouds pass as quickly as they came, and the melody ends peacefully in F major, the pastoral key of the *Andante*. As if following torrential rains, the bittersweet fifth variation suggests the reemergence of the sun; Schubert sets the theme languidly in the cello's tenor range. The sixth and final variation returns to the theme in its initial form, now featuring the piano accompaniment used in the original lied.

The affable final movement begins with a single recurring bell toll, struck *fortepiano* by the piano, viola, and cello, as if to rouse the listener from the previous movement's lullaby-esque ending. The movement's rustic central theme follows. An effortless extension of this theme arrives at a buoyant second musical idea, reminiscent of the *Die Forelle* melody.

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